

that from an island of less than 70,000 people, there are more than 30 players of Samoan ancestry currently playing professional football in the National Football League and estimated more than 200 playing currently in Division I college football.

Indeed, it is estimated that a boy born to Samoan parents is 56 times more likely to get into the NFL than any other kid in the United States, period. This is an exceptional bit of information considering that the six little high schools that we have there in the program do not have locker rooms, no weight rooms for training, no proper equipment or other needed facilities and resources. This is also considering that most of these athletes do not start playing organized football until they're in high school.

For the first time this year, we have organized a Pop Warner football program. What is interesting about this, Mr. Speaker, is that a good number of these young Pop Warner players would be disqualified if they were playing in the U.S. for the simple reason that they were too big. I know this is true in the State of Hawaii where, in the Pop Warner program, many of these young Samoan football players had to organize their own "Big Boys" football program because they would be disqualified to play Pop Warner. I know this is true in the little town of Hauula in Laie in the State of Hawaii.

Now, I don't want to give the impression to my colleagues that Samoans are a lot of muscle and brawn but no brains; no, this is not true. I know from my own given experience when I played high school football in my alma mater, Kahuku High School in Hawaii, it was like a tradition that all Samoans would play the line, the quarterback would be the Japanese, the Filipinos would be the halfbacks, but the fullback would be a Samoan. Now all that has changed, we also play quarterback these days.

In American Samoa, there were no youth or development programs until this year when they started the American Youth Football Samoa program, but still coaches and recruiters crowd our little territory for raw talent. Mr. Speaker, it was important for the whole world to see some of the challenges that the kids of American Samoa have to go through to make it to the collegiate level so that they can afford an education and for most to play in the highest level of professional football.

The fact that a Samoan boy is 56 times more likely to get into the NFL is most interesting and can be attributed not only to the size of the people but to the values of the Samoan culture. From respect to discipline and making sure that there is respect in the process, one can appreciate that the young men and women of Samoan descent hold true these values of humility. I know that these athletes with these values would be welcomed by any coach in any sport.

I want to take this opportunity to recognize the Polynesian players who were fortunate enough to make it into this year's NFL Conference Championships and will be playing in New Orleans this weekend. They are Aaron Francisco of the Indianapolis Colts; Fili Moala, the Indianapolis Colts; Ropati Pitoitua, the New York Jets; Sione Pouha of the New York Jets; Naufahu Tahi of the Minnesota Vikings. I want to personally congratulate them and their families for their success.

Also, I want to offer special recognition for our first Samoan Polynesian of Tongan ancestry, Mr. Haloti Ngata of the Baltimore Ravens, who is not only headed to his first Pro Bowl in Florida after the Super Bowl, but today is also his 26th birthday. Haloti Ngata is in his fourth year in the NFL, was drafted by the Ravens in the first round of the 2006 NFL draft, and is a graduate of the University of Oregon. At 6 feet, 5 inches and almost 350 pounds, Haloti finished the year with more than 30 tackles, two sacks, and a forced fumble.

The success of this new generation of football players, Mr. Speaker, is a result of the pathway paved by pioneers like Samoan football player Al Lolotai, who played for the Washington Redskins in 1945, Charlie Ane of the Detroit Lions, Jack "The Throwin' Samoan" Thompson, Manu and his son Marques Tuasosopo, Dan Saleaumua, Wilson Faumuina, Frank and his son Brandon Manumaleuna, Jesse Sapolu, Junior Seau, Troy Polamalu, Lofa Tatupu, Domata Peko, Rey Maualuga, Jonathan Fanene, Joe Salave'a, Pita Elisara, Esera Tuaolo, Falaniko and his brother Al Noga, Junior Ah You, and many others.

I am often asked why Samoan men have so much success on the football field. Well, there are many factors. I am reminded of the late Coach Vince Lombardi of the Green Bay Packers when he said that "Football is like life. It requires perseverance, self-denial, hard work, sacrifice, dedication, and respect for authority." This is very much part of the heart and soul of the Samoan culture which centers on the importance of families sharing each other's needs and respect for others.

HAITI

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, since the earthquake hit Haiti on January 12, we have all watched with sadness as the death toll rose, prayed for those affected, and rejoiced when survivors were found. It is an event that has directly touched the lives of people around the world, including many at home in Kansas.

I have heard some incredibly touching stories about Kansans affected by the earthquake. Many were in Haiti al-

ready serving the people of Haiti and caring for people who are less fortunate than they are.

Thirty-one-year-old Ann Varghese, a graduate of Southeast High School in Wichita and the University of Kansas, was trapped under the rubble of a hotel for 55 hours. In a tiny dark space just 3 feet high and 5 feet long, Ann spent over 2 days with five other people without water and sharing only gum and a lone Tootsie Pop. Though nothing short of a miracle, Ann made it out alive, but sadly for two of her colleagues who were trapped, they did not.

Kim Bentrrott of Belleville, Kansas, and her husband, Patrick, remain in Haiti. They made it out of their third-floor apartment just before the building collapsed. Employed through Global Ministries, they have lost their headquarters, school, offices, and medical clinic, but must stay to complete the process of adopting a son, Solomon. Now 14 months old, Kim and Patrick rescued Solomon from a Haitian orphanage as a newborn, and their dedication to providing a loving family for Solomon is an inspiration.

Six residents of the Dodge City, Kansas, area, including John Maples and Greg Love of Montezuma, Terry and Martha Major and Doug McGraw of Pierceville, and Clayton Stolfus of Meade, all survived the catastrophic earthquake. Unfortunately, this team from Independent Christian Alliance Ministries is still awaiting word when a possible return to the United States can be accomplished.

On a brighter note, Naomi Streck, a Norton native and Wichita State graduate, is part of a 21-member team from Center for Children International Life-line that escaped unhurt and has returned to Kansas.

Then there is Scott and Wanda Miller of Hesston, who are now safely home with their newly adopted Haitian son, 16-year-old Junior Oranvil Miller.

Many others, such as Jake and Amy Glover of Hays, Kansas, are among the families currently in the process of adopting children and awaiting news from Haiti. Even today, we put pressure on the Department of State to see that this adoption is completed and that their child can be returned to them in the United States.

I am proud to recognize these great individuals and many other Kansans who have devoted their lives to the betterment of Haiti through many years before the crisis and will do so into the future. It gives me hope to see so many Americans and people around the world putting aside cultural, racial, and political differences to band together in our effort to rebuild the damaged nation.

All who have donated money and supplies, served on search and rescue teams and have prayed for those affected deserve our gratitude. Today it was announced that the Kansas National Guard will be sending soldiers to Haiti from their current assignment at Guantanamo Bay. We express our appreciation, and we express our support

and concern for them and their families.

As for those of us in Congress, we are committed to doing everything in our power to ensure a swift and safe conclusion to this crisis. The people of Haiti and those affected by this tragedy are in my thoughts and our family's prayers.

HEALTH CARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATOURETTE) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. LATOURETTE. Mr. Speaker, I am going to be joined during the course of this hour by Representative THAD MCCOTTER of Michigan and perhaps others who may chime in during the course of the hour.

Mr. Speaker, the big news on Capitol Hill this week and the big news around the country was the Senate race in Massachusetts where, for the first time since the 1970s, a Republican, Senator-elect BROWN, has been elected in the State of Massachusetts. You know, there are a lot of maps around this place, blue States, red States, and Massachusetts is one of those States that they really should come up with their own color of blue. I mean, it is the deepest of blue States.

And so it was certainly a surprising event, and a lot of pundits and a lot of people are scratching their head and saying, Well, what caused this? Is it voter anger? Are they mad at Republicans? Are they mad at Democrats? Are they mad at everybody? Or how about this health care discussion? And some of the exit polling that went on up in Massachusetts indicated that, yeah, people were concerned. People were concerned about the way that both the House and the Senate health care bill were being fashioned, the process that was being used, and then some of the provisions that were in it as well.

And so I thought during the course of this hour we would spend some time talking about at least what in my opinion are some of the difficulties with the way things are going with the health care discussion, and as well as Mr. MCCOTTER's observations as well.

Before coming to the Congress, I was a prosecuting attorney and I tried cases in front of juries, and I always learned that people pay attention a little bit more and they learn a little bit better, Mr. Speaker, with their eyes than they do with their ears. So I brought with me a visual aid to help us during the course of this discussion.

With apologies to Hasbro, when I was a young person growing up, one of our favorite things to do, if the size D battery was working, was to play the game of Operation. We have modified the Hasbro game a little bit so we can talk about, from head to toe, some of the difficulties with—again, in my opinion and Mr. MCCOTTER's opinion

and apparently a good number of the American people's opinion—what's the matter with this discussion.

□ 1530

I want to start with the head up there in the Operation game. It's called a "brain freeze." I've politely taken out "brain freeze." Instead, we've put in "CMS administrator." CMS is basically the organization that runs the Medicare program in the United States of America. It has a budget of about \$700 billion a year. It's bigger than the Pentagon, and it will be tasked over the next little bit with implementing the rules and procedures of this health care legislation, either bill or some modification of the bill, and putting this thing into place.

So you would think, if you're a supporter of this health care reform that is barreling through the Congress, well, I hope we've got a topnotch guy or gal in charge at CMS.

Sadly, the reason that there is a question mark up there is that there is no administrator at CMS. As a matter of fact, the last time there was a confirmed administrator at the Medicare oversight administration was in 2006, October 2006. Of course, people who watch the calendar know that that wasn't all on President Obama's watch. It was in the last couple of years of President George W. Bush's administration. He nominated a fellow by the name of Kerry Weems, who was acting administrator, but the Democrat-controlled Senate refused to confirm Mr. Weems.

The interesting thing about it as you know—because people get accused of playing politics all the time. So you say, What was Mr. Weems? Was Mr. Weems like Rush Limbaugh? Was he like Glenn Beck? Was he some dyed-in-the-wool partisan? Actually, Mr. Weems—and this was written about him by one of the analysts: The nomination of Mr. Weems will be a departure from tradition. Historically, CMS administrators have either been academics or lobbyists. The academics often lack leadership and executive skills. The lobbyists often come across as too Machiavellian.

Since CMS was formed in 1978—it used to be called HCFA—there have been 30 administrators. Mr. Weems would have been the first administrator, if the Senate had chosen to confirm him in 2006, who actually was a career person who had worked his way up within the CMS structure. He was not a political hack; he wasn't a political appointee, but for reasons known only to them, the Democratic majority in the Senate didn't want to confirm him.

Now fast-forward to a year ago almost exactly, and President Obama is inaugurated. You would think that, if one of the big national priorities that we're going to talk about is health care, one of the first nominations or maybe the second nomination would be to get somebody in charge of this pro-

gram so that when this rather large restructuring of one-sixth of the Nation's economy is passed that we're going to have our best talent on the ground, whether you agree with it or not. We are now 1 year and 1 day into the Obama administration, and we have yet to have a nominee put forward for that position. Certainly, we have not had anyone confirmed for that position.

Mr. MCCOTTER.

Mr. MCCOTTER. Would the gentleman yield for a question?

Mr. LATOURETTE. I'd be happy to.

Mr. MCCOTTER. Obviously, the President has had a very eventful first year since his inauguration.

Would it not be fair to say that the rush of events and the focus on getting things done has precluded this position from being filled?

Mr. LATOURETTE. Well, I think there is some of that, but it's interesting that you should bring that up.

Just yesterday—and this isn't unique to the Obama administration. Every administration has a lot of jobs to fill. Just yesterday, the President of the United States sent up 40 nominations to the Senate to consider for confirmation under the Constitution so that they could begin to serve. There were some judges; there were some U.S. attorneys; there were some United States marshals. Interestingly enough, I found that he even had time to name two people to fill vacancies on the Marine Mammal Commission, but not one of those 40 is the new director of CMS.

Quite frankly—and we're not going to talk about national security today—you know, his nominee for the TSA, who are the folks who frisk you at the airport, just withdrew. We don't have any nominee in the pipeline for that either.

Mr. MCCOTTER. Will the gentleman yield again?

Mr. LATOURETTE. I'd be happy to.

Mr. MCCOTTER. I just want to be clear that, despite the fact that there has been no name forwarded—let alone confirmed—for the position at CMS, we do have two appointees of the Marine Mammal Commission.

Mr. LATOURETTE. We do.

Mr. MCCOTTER. In fairness, as a Detroit, it sounds like a Matt Millen draft.

I yield back.

Mr. LATOURETTE. I thank the gentleman very much.

So, if you begin at the head, clearly we have a problem in that we don't have anybody in charge should this health care legislation pass and become law.

We next go down to the Adam's Apple. I left the Adam's apple on the chart because the way this thing has gone—and it really epitomizes the entire last year. We were told we had to have an \$800 billion stimulus bill by President's Day. Nobody knows why. It's not because we're going to spend it on Presidential stuff, but we needed to have the stimulus bill, so we got it